

Adult Protective Services priority definitions

Adults living in their own home

Within 24 hours: Serious or life-threatening harm is occurring or appears to be imminent.

Examples:

- ▶ Serious physical wounds may be present such as a possible fracture, burn, laceration, head injury, internal injuries, bruising on the head or trunk of body
- ▶ Emergency response was summoned by intake (e.g., police, EMT, CDMHP)
- ▶ Self-neglect or neglect resulting in risk of imminent serious injury such as freezing, starvation, or hemorrhaging
- ▶ Individual is in need of urgent medical attention and is refusing or unable to consent to medical care
- ▶ Caregiver has abandoned a vulnerable adult without a means to protect or care for self (e.g., individual with dementia)

Within 5 working days: Harm that is more than minor, but does not appear to be serious or life-threatening. It may be past, present, or possible in the future.

Examples:

- ▶ Stable physical or mental condition that is not acute
- ▶ Chronic self-neglect
- ▶ Exploitation

Within 10 working days: Harm that poses a minor risk to health or safety. It may be past, present, or possible in the future.

Examples:

- ▶ Financial exploitation or neglect related to failure to pay the vulnerable adult's residential facility bill, and placement is not immediately jeopardized
- ▶ Allegation of an event that occurred weeks or months ago without apparent risk of re-occurrence
- ▶ Verbal abuse, such as harassment or cursing
- ▶ Unkempt or filthy living conditions

Residential Care Services complaint priority definitions

Within 2 working days: Actual or potential life-threatening situation that has caused, or is at risk of causing, substantial harm.

Examples:

- ▶ Sexual or physical abuse
- ▶ Gross neglect by provider

Within 10 working days: Actual or potential harm where it is evident that immediate jeopardy has been removed. Situation may be present and ongoing, or has high potential for reoccurrence.

Examples:

- ▶ Resident with recurring falls but no injury
- ▶ General neglect suspected because reporter's facts don't add up
- ▶ Inconclusive or limited information about situation, such as public complainant says parent keeps falling and facility is not doing anything about it

Within 20 working days: Allegation of a situation for a resident that is not likely to reoccur, but if it did, would pose a risk of potential harm for that resident or other residents.

Example: Resident requires assistance to go to the bathroom, but fell and fractured hip after getting up to go to the bathroom without assistance

Within 45 working days: Situation commonly involves failure to provide general care and services.

Example: Complaint regarding facility taking too long to answer call lights, but no resident names are mentioned

Within 90 working days: Allegation is general in nature, anonymous, and a survey is scheduled within 90 working days.

Example: Facility is scheduled to have a survey very soon, and RCS receives complaint that the facility smells bad

Quality review: The home appears to have taken appropriate action in response to the situation, and measures have been instituted by the home to prevent reoccurrences.

Example: Facility reported resident fell and had a fracture, but it's clearly not due to abuse/neglect

Abuse prevention programs and activities

National studies suggest that only one in five allegations of abuse is ever reported

Preventing adult abuse

- ▶ DSHS annual public awareness campaign – Adult Abuse Prevention Month.
- ▶ AAAs fund local activities such as training community members such as postal workers to recognize and report signs of abuse.
- ▶ ADSA works with King County Prosecutor's Office on its annual statewide Elder Abuse Conference.
- ▶ Long-Term Care Ombudsman investigates problems in adult family homes, boarding homes and nursing homes and reports serious problems to DSHS.

Supporting family caregivers

- ▶ Provide respite for 4,000 long-term care and DDD caregivers to help avoid burnout and abuse.
- ▶ Promote annual Caregiver Month and annual conferences for caregivers.
- ▶ Family caregiver support programs delivered about 10,000 service units to long-term care clients in FY04.

Reporting elder abuse, neglect, exploitation

- ▶ DSHS publicizes a toll-free number providing

24-hour abuse reporting: 1-866-EndHarm.

- ▶ DSHS regions convene local meetings of staff and law enforcement on complex cases.

Strategies

Support for family caregivers

- ▶ Increase respite funding.

Prevent adult abuse

- ▶ Expand statute to require that banks become mandatory reporters of financial exploitation.
- ▶ Pursue gubernatorial and NGA support for Federal Elder Justice Act.

Strengthen existing abuse programs

- ▶ Expand Resident Protection Program from nursing homes to boarding homes and adult family homes.
- ▶ Work with CTED to expand ombudsman program into more adult family homes.
- ▶ Make abuse findings available to private employers through DSHS background check unit.
- ▶ Increase standardized quality assurance in the Adult Protective Services program.
- ▶ Increase resources for establishment of guardianships of vulnerable adults.